



How to cope with calamities



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful





Assalamu'alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu,

We pray that this message reaches you
in good health and imaan.

On behalf of our AMAU Academy team, we would like
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May Allah make our paths toward seeking
beneficial knowledge easy and kindle our hearts
with sincerity and gratefulness
towards Him.

Jazakumullahu Khayran



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جل جلاله | Jalla Jalāluhu
Allah the Most Exalted



صلى الله عليه وسلم | Sallāllāhu Alayhi Wa Sallam
Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him

The World is Temporary

Chapter One

Calamities, tests and trials are elements of this *dunya* no human being has the ability to escape. These tests and trials may come to us in the form of scarcity of provision, health problems, loss of loved ones or loss of property and wealth. Such losses have means attached to them by Allah ﷻ, may He be glorified and exalted, and they may affect us by means of natural disasters: earthquakes, floods, or the violence one human being inflicts on another. The first step in coping with these tests and calamities is to have the correct belief regarding the world we live in. Every person must remind himself that this world is only temporary – it is not meant to last.

Allah ﷻ explains to us, His servants, the nature of the *dunya* which He created:

- 1 **الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفُورُ**
[He] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is best in deed – and He is the Exalted in Might, the Forgiving.

Surah Al Mulk 2

After Allah ﷻ created us and gave us life, He tests us with both good and evil as a trial, and every soul shall die:

- 2 **لُ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ۚ وَنَبْلُوكُم بِالشَّرِّ وَالْخَيْرِ فِتْنَةً ۚ وَإِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ**
{Every soul will taste death. And We test you with evil and with good as trial; and to Us you will be returned.}

Surah Al Anbiya 35

The nature of this life is that Allah ﷻ has created us into hardship:

- 3 **لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ**
{We have certainly created man into hardship.}

Surah Al Balad 4

Apart from the trials and the nature of this world which is hardship, Allah ﷻ, may He be exalted, informs us that He further test the believers in order to distinguish them from those who merely profess their submission to Him, without actually believing in their hearts:

- 4 **أَحْسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا آمَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ. وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكَاذِبِينَ**
{Do the people think that they will be left to say, "We believe" and they will not be tried? But We have certainly tried those before them, and Allāh will surely make evident those who are truthful, and He will surely make evident the liars.}

Surah Al-'Ankaboot 2-3

The only way to survive a world of tests and hardship is to be patient. Allah ﷻ instructs His Prophet ﷺ in the following ayah:

4

فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ أُولُو الْعَزْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ وَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلْ لَهُمْ ۚ كَانَتْهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ مَا يُوْعَدُونَ
لَمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلَّا سَاعَةً مِنْ نَهَارٍ ۚ بَلَاغٌ ۚ فَهَلْ يُهْلِكُ إِلَّا الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقُونَ

So be patient, [O Muḥammad], as were those of determination among the messengers and do not be impatient for them. It will be – on the Day they see that which they are promised – as though they had not remained [in the world] except an hour of a day. [This is] notification. And will [any] be destroyed except the defiantly disobedient people

Surah Al-Ahqaf 35

Allah ﷻ reminds His Prophet ﷺ to be patient, and that the Messengers before him had to practice patience when calling their people to Islam, the religion of Allah ﷻ. We can take lessons from the *seerah* (biography) of our Messenger Muhammad ﷺ and how much he had to endure for the cause of Islam, and the calamities and tests he had to face during his lifetime. We can also read the biographies of the Sahabah and the righteous people who came after them in order to take lessons from the manner in which they dealt with the tests of this life.

Allah ﷻ, may He be exalted, calls us to believe in His promise – that the Hereafter shall come to pass – and that we not get deceived by Shaytan and his followers:

5

إِنَّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ حَقًّا ۖ فَلَا تَغُرَّنَكُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا ۖ وَلَا يَغُرَّنَكُم بِاللَّهِ الْغُرُورُ

{O mankind, indeed the promise of Allāh is truth, so let not the worldly life delude you and be not deceived about Allāh by the Deceiver [i.e., Satan].}

Surah Fatir 5

6

عَلِمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُمْ زِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ ۖ
كَمَثَلٍ غَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَاهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَامًا ۖ وَفِي
الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٌ ۚ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ

{Know that the life of this world is but amusement and diversion and adornment and boasting to one another and competition in increase of wealth and children – like the example of a rain whose [resulting] plant growth pleases the tillers; then it dries and you see it turned yellow; then it becomes [scattered] debris. And in the Hereafter is severe punishment and forgiveness from Allāh and approval. And what is the worldly life except the enjoyment of delusion.}

Surah Al-Hadeed 20

Know for certain that this life is temporary, and you are not meant to receive the full reward of your good deeds in this life:

7

لُ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ۖ وَإِنَّمَا تُوَفَّقُونَ أُجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۖ فَمَنْ زُحْزِحَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ ۚ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ

Every soul will taste death, and you will only be given your [full] compensation on the Day of Resurrection. So he who is drawn away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise has attained [his desire]. And what is the life of this world except the enjoyment of delusion.

Surah Al-'Imran 185

After knowing the temporary nature of this life, knowing that death will surely come to pass, and being informed of Allah's promise, how can anyone hope and wish for the pleasures of this life? The Prophet ﷺ informs us of the reality of this life for a believer, and how a disbeliever perceives it:

8

الدُّنْيَا سَجْنُ الْمُؤْمِنِ وَجَنَّةُ الْكَافِرِ

Abu Hurayrah (radiya Allahu 'anhu) narrated that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: "The world is the believer's prison and the disbeliever's paradise."

Muslim 2956

If a person believes in Allah ﷻ and the Last Day, and strives to apply the religion of Allah ﷻ as well as the Sunnah of His Messenger in His life, making his primary goal the Hereafter, he will necessarily live a life that is different from a person who does not believe in the Hereafter. A person must be firm in his belief and steadfast, then have patience over his trials for the cause of Allah ﷻ.

The Prophet ﷺ would always remind his Companions to be patient and not hasty:

9

شَكُونَا إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَهُوَ مُتَوَسِّدٌ بُرْدَةً لَهُ فِي ظِلِّ الْكَعْبَةِ فَقُلْنَا: أَلَا تَسْتَنْصِرُ لَنَا أَلَا تَدْعُو لَنَا؟ فَقَالَ: قَدْ كَانَ مِنْ قَبْلَكُمْ، يُؤْخَذُ الرَّجُلُ فَيُحْفَرُ لَهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ، فَيُجْعَلُ فِيهَا، فَيُجَاءُ بِالْمِنْشَارِ فَيُوضَعُ عَلَى رَأْسِهِ فَيُجْعَلُ نِصْفَيْنِ، وَيُمَشَّطُ بِأَمْشَاطِ الْحَدِيدِ، مَا دُونَ لَحْمِهِ وَعَظْمِهِ، فَمَا يَصُدُّهُ ذَلِكَ عَنْ دِينِهِ، وَاللَّهِ لَيَتِمَّنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرُ، حَتَّى يَسِيرَ الرَّكَّابُ مِنْ صَنْعَاءَ إِلَى حَضْرَمَوْتَ، لَا يَخَافُ إِلَّا اللَّهَ، وَالذُّنْبَ عَلَى غَنَمِهِ، وَلَكِنَّكُمْ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ

Khabbab Ibn al-Aratt (radiya Allahu'anhu) narrated and said: We complained to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ [regarding Quraysh's persecution of us], while he was resting in the shade of the Ka'bah, using his garment as a pillow. We said: "Will you not ask [Allah ﷻ] to grant us help and supplicate for us?" He ﷺ replied: "From the people before you, a man would be seized, a hole would be dug for him in the ground, and he would be placed in it. A saw would be placed on his head, and he would be sawed in half. His skin would be sawed with the teeth of the metal, leaving bare his flesh and bones. But that would not turn him away from his religion. By Allah ﷻ, the matter [of this religion] will be completed, until a rider will travel from San'a to Hadramout, not fearing anyone except Allah ﷻ, except a wolf over his sheep. However, you are being hasty."

Al-Bukharee 6943

In the story of the magicians of Fir'awn we have a good example of being patient for the cause of Allah ﷻ:

10

قالوا لَنْ نُؤْثِرَكَ عَلَىٰ مَا جَاءَنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالَّذِي فَطَرَنَا ۖ فَاقْضِ مَا أَنْتَ قَاضٍ ۖ إِنَّمَا تَقْضِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ۚ إِنَّا آمَنَّا بِرَبِّنَا لِيَغْفِرَ لَنَا خَطَايَانَا وَمَا أَكْرَهْتَنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنَ السِّحْرِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ

They said, "Never will we prefer you over what has come to us of clear proofs and [over] He who created us. So decree whatever you are to decree. You can only decree for this worldly life. our sins and what you compelled us [to do] of magic. And Allāh is better and more enduring."

Surah Ta Ha 72-73

Knowing Allah ﷻ

Chapter Two

In the first lesson we learned that the way a person copes with calamities that befall him will depend on his belief about the world. Do I believe in the promise of Allah ﷻ? Do my actions reflect that of a person who looks forward to the Hereafter? Do I believe I will receive my reward in full in the *akhirah*, and not in this *dunya*? These are some questions a person may ask himself. After confirming this belief about the temporary nature of the *dunya*, the next step is to know Allah ﷻ, the Creator of everything. If a person knows Allah ﷻ, and he knows His attributes and His actions, he will cope with his tests, trials and calamities with ease bi-idhni-Allah. If a person struggles with the calamities that befall him and he feels discontent and he is resentful, he does not fully know Allah ﷻ.

Ya'qoob ('alayhi as-salam), when dealing with his sorrow and suffering of losing his two sons, said:

1 **قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَشْكُو بَثِّي وَحُزْنِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ**
{He said, "I only complain of my suffering and my grief to Allāh, and I know from Allāh that which you do not know.}

Surah Yusuf 86

Indeed, Ya'qoob (alayhi as-salam), the noble Prophet of Allah ﷻ, coped with this tragedy of his in the best of manners, and in it is a lesson for us. He did not complain of his suffering and grief to anyone but Allah ﷻ, showing his patience, and he knew that Allah ﷻ had a plan for him and for his family.

If a person dealing with a calamity or tragedy knows that Allah ﷻ is al-Hakeem (The Wise) and al-'Aleem (The Knowing), and he knows that Allah ﷻ has a plan for him and for his loved ones, and that Allah ﷻ will not abandon them without His promise and plan coming to effect, he will be like the Prophet Ya'qoob – he will know about Allah ﷻ what others do not know. A person must make an effort to know about Allah's names, attributes, His actions and His Sunnah [Allah's established way of dealing with His creation].

If a person truly knows Allah ﷻ, He will know that the help of Allah ﷻ is always near:

2 **مَحْسَبَتُهُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسَّتْهُمُ الْبَأْسَاءُ وَالضَّرَاءُ وَزُلْزِلُوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَى نَصْرُ اللَّهِ أَلاَ إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ**
{Or do you think that you will enter Paradise while such [trial] has not yet come to you as came to those who passed on before you? They were touched by poverty and hardship and were shaken until [even their] messenger and those who believed with him said, "When is the help of Allāh?" Unquestionably, the help of Allāh is near.}

Surah Al-Baqarah 214

A person must know and believe that Allah ﷻ will not decree anything except that the end result is good for you:

3

تَبَّ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهُ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا
وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

{Fighting has been enjoined upon you while it is hateful to you. But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allāh knows, while you know not.}

Surah Al-Baqarah 216

If a person knows that Allah ﷻ is Ar-Rahman (The Merciful), Al-Ghafoor (The Forgiving) and Al-Wadood (The Affectionate), that Allah ﷻ does not decree except for a wisdom, and that Allah ﷻ only intends good for him and never evil, how will a person assume that Allah ﷻ wants bad for him or that He will not help him?

Allah ﷻ also says regarding disliking a thing that may be decreed for you:

4

فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا

{Perhaps you dislike a thing and Allāh makes therein much good}

Surah An Nisa 19

Thus, it is important that every believer knows his *Rabb*, the One who created him, provides for him, and is in control of all of his affairs – whether big or small. If a person knows Allah ﷻ, the calamity or trial he faces will bring him closer to Him. Increasing in prayer, du’a and recitation of the Quran; as well as attaching your heart to Allah ﷻ and hoping only for His promise to come to pass during hardship will indeed bring you near to Allah ﷻ. Some people enjoy this nearness to Allah ﷻ so much that they wish the calamity would not stop.

Knowing the Decree of Allah ﷻ

Chapter Three

After knowing the temporary nature of this *dunya* and knowing Allah ﷻ, His names and His attributes, the next step when coping with calamities is to know *al-qadr* (Allah's decree). This knowledge falls into the category of knowing Allah ﷻ, but is mentioned separately due to the importance of the subject. Regarding *al-qadr*, Allah ﷻ says:

- 1 **ما أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ قَلْبَهُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ**
{No disaster strikes except by permission of Allāh. And whoever believes in Allāh – He will guide his heart. And Allāh is Knowing of all things.}

Surah At-Taghabun 11

Allah informs us that no type of disaster befalls a human except that it is by His permission. We must know that it happened by the infinite Knowledge and Wisdom of Allah. It could be that Allah wants to draw you nearer to Him through this hardship or He wants to cleanse you of your sins, among other reasons. Allah ﷻ then says that whoever believes in Allah ﷻ, i.e., His decree, Allah ﷻ will guide his heart. Thus, it is incumbent on you to believe in Allah's decree, and Allah ﷻ will guide you through that hardship.

Understanding the *qadr* of Allah ﷻ will bring about relief from calamities. There are two things to incorporate into your belief of *al-qadr* in order for it to help you bring relief from calamities:

1. **Realize that you are in complete need of Allah ﷻ.**
2. **Know that Allah ﷻ will never oppress you; instead, Allah ﷻ wishes to guide you and He helps those who work for what they want to achieve. Intend to place your best effort and complete work and action, and then put your trust in Allah ﷻ, that He will guide your affair and He will guide you to what is better for you.**

Your job as a Muslim is to realize that Allah ﷻ has knowledge and power over everything, so you must have hope in Allah. After that, you must exert some effort to remedy your situation while keeping away from the prohibitions of Allah , having *taqwa*. You must know that by Allah's Grace and Mercy, He will not leave you to yourself. Do what you can by placing effort and utilizing the means available to you, then place your trust in Allah ﷻ – that He will guide you to the best opportunity. Allah ﷻ says:

- 2 **وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا**
And whoever fears Allāh – He will make for him a way out

Surah At-Talaq 2

In one of the most profound *ahadeeth* of the Prophet ﷺ , he advises us to look forward to the future, put in effort, have hope in Allah ﷻ, and to not grieve over the past:

3

الْمُؤْمِنُ الْقَوِيُّ خَيْرٌ وَأَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِ الضَّعِيفِ وَفِي كُلِّ خَيْرٍ احْرِصْ عَلَى مَا يَنْفَعُكَ
وَاسْتَعِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْجِزْ وَإِنْ أَصَابَكَ شَيْءٌ فَلَا تَقُلْ لَوْ أَنِّي فَعَلْتُ كَانَتْ كَذَا وَكَذَا. وَلَكِنْ قُلْ قَدَرُ اللَّهِ
وَمَا شَاءَ فَعَلَ فَإِنَّ لَوْ تَفْتَحُ عَمَلَ الشَّيْطَانِ

Abu Hurayrah (radiya Allahu‘anhu) narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah ﷻ than the weak believer, while there is good in both of them. Strive to do what will benefit you, seek assistance from Allah ﷻ, and do not become helpless. If something befalls you, do not say: “If only this, then such and such would have happened”, but say: “Qadru Allahi wa ma sha-a fa’ala (This was the Decree of Allah ﷻ, and He does what He wishes).” Indeed, saying “if only” opens the work of the Shaytan.”

Muslim (2664)

However, is it correct to say “*Qadru Allahi wa ma sha-a fa’ala*” in every situation? One cannot use the *qadr* of Allah ﷻ as an excuse for his misdeeds he does not repent from, or as an excuse for not putting in effort to remedy his situation. Putting in effort and action is one of the ways a person seeks the assistance of Allah ﷻ, along with supplication, prayer and practicing patience. If a person has a mountain of debt – and people around him suffer due to his choices – but he says: “*Qadru Allahi wa ma sha-a fa’ala*”; that is not the application in the belief of *al-qadr*. Rather, we put in our best effort, utilizing the *asbab* (means to attain something) Allah has made available to us, then we put our trust in Allah.

In yet another remarkable hadeeth, the Prophet ﷺ advises Ibn ‘Abbas about placing effort and believing in the *qadr* of Allah ﷻ with these heartfelt words:

4

يَا غُلَامُ إِنِّي أَعَلِّمُكَ كَلِمَاتٍ ، احْفَظِ اللَّهَ يَحْفَظَكَ ، احْفَظِ اللَّهَ تَجِدْهُ تُجَاهَكَ ، إِذَا سَأَلْتَ فَاسْأَلِ
اللَّهَ ، وَإِذَا اسْتَعَنْتَ فَاسْتَعِنْ بِاللَّهِ ، وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ الْأُمَّةَ لَوِ اجْتَمَعَتْ عَلَى أَنْ يَنْفَعُوكَ بِشَيْءٍ لَمْ
يَنْفَعُوكَ إِلَّا بِشَيْءٍ قَدْ كَتَبَهُ اللَّهُ لَكَ ، وَإِنْ اجْتَمَعُوا عَلَى أَنْ يَضُرُّوكَ بِشَيْءٍ لَمْ يَضُرُّوكَ إِلَّا بِشَيْءٍ قَدْ
كَتَبَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ ، رُفِعَتِ الْأَقْلَامُ وَجَفَّتِ الصُّحُفُ

Ibn ‘Abbas narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said to him: “O young man, I will teach you some words [to abide by]: Guard Allah ﷻ [i.e., His boundaries], Allah ﷻ will guard you. Guard Allah ﷻ, and you will find him before you. When you ask, ask of Allah ﷻ, and when you seek assistance, seek it from Allah ﷻ. Know that if the Ummah gathered in order to benefit you with something, they will never give you benefit except with something Allah ﷻ has written for you; and if they gathered in order to bring harm to you with something, they will never be able to harm you except with something Allah ﷻ has written against you. The pens [of the Decree] have been lifted, and the scrolls have dried.”

Narrated by at-Tirmidhee (2516), and graded as saheeh by al-Albanee

In another narration of the same hadeeth, the following addition is found:

5

تَعَرَّفَ إِلَى اللَّهِ فِي الرِّخَاءِ يَعْرِفُكَ فِي الشَّدَّةِ

Come to know Allah ﷻ in prosperity, and Allah ﷻ will be aware of you [i.e., fulfill your needs] during hardship.

واعلم أنَّ في الصَّبْرِ على ما تَكْرَهُ خَيْرًا كثيرًا ، وَأَنَّ النِّصْرَ مع الصَّبْرِ ، وَأَنَّ الفَرْجَ مع الكَرْبِ ، وَأَنَّ مع العُسْرِ يُسْرًا

Know that much good will come about when you have patience over what you dislike. Also, know that victory comes with patience, and relief will come after suffering, and with hardship comes ease.

Who Are Afflicted With Calamities?

Chapter Four

There may be misconceptions among people that calamities and hardship only afflict wrongdoers, and that prosperity and happiness are signs that the Lord loves you and that it only comes to doers of good. This is certainly not the case. The following hadeeth clarifies what types of people are afflicted with hardship the most:

1

قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَيُّ النَّاسِ أَشَدُّ بَلَاءً قَالَ الْأَنْبِيَاءُ ثُمَّ الْأَمْثَلُ فَالْأَمْثَلُ ؛ يُبْتَلَى الرَّجُلُ عَلَى حَسَبِ دِينِهِ ، فَإِنْ كَانَ فِي دِينِهِ صَلْبًا اشْتَدَّ بَلَاؤُهُ ، وَإِنْ كَانَ فِي دِينِهِ رِقَّةٌ ابْتُلِيَ عَلَى قَدَرِ دِينِهِ ، فَمَا يَبْرُحُ الْبَلَاءُ بِالْعَبْدِ حَتَّى يَتْرُكَهُ يَمْشِي عَلَى الْأَرْضِ وَمَا عَلَيْهِ خَطِيئَةٌ

Sa'd Ibn Abee Waqqas (radiya Allahu 'anhu) narrated that he said: "O Messenger of Allah, which of the people are afflicted with trial the most?" He ﷺ said: "The Prophets, and then the best of the people [after the Prophets], and the best of the people [after that]. A man will be tested according to his religious commitment. If there is resoluteness in his religion, his trials will be more severe; and if there is some wavering in his religion, he will be tested according to the level of his religion. The trials will not depart from a servant until they leave him walking upon the earth with no sin."

Narrated by At-Tirmidhee (2398) and graded as saheeh by al-Albanee

Thus, we learn that the Prophets, the best of mankind, are afflicted with trials the most. When studying their lives as well as that of the Sahabah and the righteous people before us, we learn that their tests and trials were severe. The stronger a person's religious commitment, the more he or she will be tested. Hence, we come to learn that the idea that bad things only happen to bad people is false. Indeed, trial can bring about goodness, such as leaving a believer walking on the earth with no sin left on him, as the hadeeth mentions.

One of the ways to relieve ourselves of calamities and hardship is to help others who are suffering:

2

مَنْ نَفَّسَ عَنْ مُؤْمِنٍ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرْبِ الدُّنْيَا، نَفَّسَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرْبِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ، وَمَنْ يَسِّرَ عَلَى مُعْسِرٍ، يَسِّرَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ، وَمَنْ سَتَرَ مُسْلِمًا، سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ، وَاللَّهُ فِي عَوْنِ الْعَبْدِ مَا كَانَ الْعَبْدُ فِي عَوْنِ أَخِيهِ

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Whoever relieves a believer from a trouble of the troubles of the world, Allah ﷻ will relieve him of a trouble from the troubles of the Day of Judgment. And whoever eases the burden of the one who is bankrupt, Allah ﷻ will ease [his affair] in the world and in the Hereafter. Whoever conceals a Muslim's sin, Allah ﷻ will conceal his faults in the world and in the Hereafter. And Allah ﷻ assists the servant as long as he is assisting his brother in faith."

Narrated by Muslim (2699)

One of the ways to help your brother or sister in faith is to supplicate for them, as evidenced by this hadeeth:

3

ما مِنْ عَبْدٍ مُسْلِمٍ يَدْعُو لِأَخِيهِ بِظَهْرِ الْغَيْبِ، إِلَّا قَالَ الْمَلَكُ: وَلَكَ بِمِثْلِ

Abu ad-Darda narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “There is no Muslim servant who supplicates for his brother [in faith] in his absence, except that an angel will say: “May you be granted the same.”

Narrated by Muslim (2732)

4

فَإِنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ يَقُولُ: دَعْوَةُ الْمَرْءِ الْمُسْلِمِ لِأَخِيهِ بِظَهْرِ الْغَيْبِ مُسْتَجَابَةٌ، عِنْدَ رَأْسِهِ مَلَكٌ مُوَكَّلٌ كُلَّمَا دَعَا لِأَخِيهِ بِخَيْرٍ، قَالَ الْمَلَكُ الْمُوَكَّلُ بِهِ: آمِينَ وَلَكَ بِمِثْلِ

Safwan Ibn ‘Abd-Allah Ibn Safwan narrated: Indeed, the Prophet ﷺ used to say: “The supplication of a Muslim for his brother [in faith] in his absence is one that is answered. There will be an angel appointed over him. Everytime he supplicates for something good for his brother, the appointed angel will say: “*Ameen*. May you be granted the same.”

Narrated by Muslim (2733)

Removing Calamities Through Repentance

Chapter Five

After attaining the correct knowledge about the nature of this world, about Allah ﷻ, and His Decree, it is important to know why unpleasant and disagreeable things happen in the first place:

- 1 **ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ**
{Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned so He [i.e., Allāh] may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness].}
 Surah Ar-Room 41

In a statement attributed to ‘Aliy Ibn Abee Talib and some of the Companions, it is related:

- 2 **ما نزل بلاء إلا بذنب، ولا رفع إلا بتوبة**
No calamity descends except because of a sin, and it is not lifted except with repentance.

Thus, we learn that calamity descends due to sins that the Children of Adam commit, and it is relieved by *tawbah* (repenting to Allah ﷻ).

Allah ﷻ also says:

- 3 **وَلَنُذِيقَهُمْ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَدْنَىٰ دُونَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَكْبَرِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ**
{And We will surely let them taste the nearer punishment short of the greater punishment that perhaps they will return [i.e., repent].}
 Surah As-Sajdah 21

Allah ﷻ, through His mercy, causes calamities and punishment to take place on earth, so that people will have a chance to return to Him in repentance, saving them of a severe, lasting punishment in the Hereafter. If you find that the hardship you are going through is bringing you closer to Allah ﷻ, this is good for you and it is a sign that you are doing what you are supposed to.

In a story related from one of the imams of the *tabi'een*, three people came to him while complaining about their hardships. The first person came and was complaining about his suffering due to drought. The imam told him to seek Allah's forgiveness. The second person came to him, complaining about the hardship he was enduring due to poverty. The imam also told him to seek Allah's forgiveness. Finally, the third person came to him and complained about not being able to have children. The imam told him to seek Allah's forgiveness. Observing this, his students asked him why he advised those three people to seek Allah's forgiveness. The imam quoted the following ayat:

- 4 **فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا. يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا. وَيُمْدِدْكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ أَنْهَارًا**
{And said, 'Ask forgiveness of your Lord. Indeed, He is ever a Perpetual Forgiver. He will send [rain from] the sky upon you in [continuing] showers. And give you increase in wealth and children and provide for you gardens and provide for you rivers.}
 Surah Nuh 10-12

With that said, how does one seek Allah's forgiveness and what is *al-istighfar*? It encompasses three things: It is to ask Allah ﷻ to conceal the sin for you, to overlook it, and to ask Allah ﷻ to remove the consequences of the sin in the dunya and the akhirah. Hence, with doing *al-istighfar*, you are admitting your fault and wrongdoing, and you are humbling yourself to Allah, asking Him to remove its consequences.

It is also important to learn the conditions of *tawbah* (repentance). In order for your *tawbah* to be valid, you must:

- 1 **Feel remorse for the sin you committed – having to do with the past.**
- 2 **Desist from the action – having to do with the present.**
- 3 **Intend to not return to the sin again – having to do with the future.**
- 4 **If the sin involves the rights of others, you must give back what is due to them.**

Besides repentance, another means to remove hardship is to do *du'a* to Allah; Allah ﷻ says:

- 5 **مَنْ يُجِيبُ الْمُضْطَرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ وَيَجْعَلُكُمْ خُلَفَاءَ الْأَرْضِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ ۖ قَلِيلًا مَا تَذَكَّرُونَ**
{Is He [not best] who responds to the desperate one when he calls upon Him and removes evil and makes you inheritors of the earth? Is there a deity with Allāh? Little do you remember.}
 Surah An-Naml 62

- 6 **وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ**
And your Lord says, "Call upon Me; I will respond to you." Indeed, those who disdain My worship will enter Hell [rendered] contemptible.
 Surah Ghafir 60

When doing *du'a*, you must be certain that Allah ﷻ will respond to your supplication; the Prophet ﷺ instructs us:

- 7 **ادْعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَنْتُمْ مُوقِنُونَ بِالْإِجَابَةِ**
Abu Hurayrah narrated that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: "Invoke Allah while you are certain of the answer [to your supplication]."
 Narrated by At-Tirmidhee (3479) and graded as Hasan by al-Albanee

There are specific supplications one can say at the time of calamity and trial. Allah ﷻ, may He be exalted, says of His Prophet Yunus ('alayhi as-salam):

- 8 **وَذَا النُّونِ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَىٰ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ. فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْغَمِّ ۚ وَكَذَلِكَ نُنْجِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ**
{[And [mention] the man of the fish [i.e., Jonah], when he went off in anger and thought that We would not decree [anything] upon him. And he called out within the darknesses, "There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers." So We responded to him and saved him from the distress. And thus do We save the believers.}
 Surah yunus 87-88

Pronouncing the statement of *tawheed*, professing that there is none worthy of worship except Allah ﷻ, then recognizing your sin and asking Allah ﷻ for forgiveness will surely be a means for Allah ﷻ to answer your call and forgive your wrongdoing as well as the consequence of it.

There are many *ad'iyah* (supplications) narrated in the Sunnah, and they are a means to remove grief and distress:

9

دَخَلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ الْمَسْجِدَ فَإِذَا هُوَ بِرَجُلٍ مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ يَقُولُ لَهُ أَبُو أُمَامَةَ فَقَالَ: يَا أَبَا أُمَامَةَ مَا لِي أَرَاكَ جَالِسًا فِي الْمَسْجِدِ فِي غَيْرِ وَقْتِ الصَّلَاةِ. قَالَ هَمُومٌ لَزِمْتَنِي وَدِيونٌ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ. قَالَ: أَفَلَا أَعَلَّمُكَ كَلَامًا إِذَا أَنْتَ قُلْتَهُ أَذْهَبَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ هَمَّكَ وَقَضَى عَنْكَ دَيْنَكَ. قَالَ: قُلْتُ بلى يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ. قَالَ: قُلْ إِذَا أَصْبَحْتَ وَإِذَا أَمْسَيْتَ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَمِّ وَالْحَزَنِ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْجَبَنِ وَالْبَخْلِ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ غَلَبَةِ الدَّيْنِ وَقَهْرِ الرِّجَالِ. قَالَ فَفَعَلْتُ ذَلِكَ فَأَذْهَبَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ هَمِّي وَقَضَى عَنِّي دَيْنِي

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudriy (radiya Allahu 'anhu) narrated that the Messenger of Allah entered the masjid one day, and he came upon a man there from the Ansar named Abu Umamah. He said: "Abu Umamah, what are you doing sitting in the masjid when it is not prayer time?" He replied: "It is because of worries that have overcome me and debt, O Messenger of Allah." The Prophet said: "Shall I not teach you some words, when you say them, Allah ﷻ will remove your distress and will settle your debt for you." He said: "Yes, of course, O Messenger of Allah." He said: "Say, in the morning and in the evening: Allahumma innee a'oodhu bika min al-hammi wa al-hazani wa a'oodhu bika min al-'ajzi wa al-kasali, wa a'oodhu bika min al-jubni wa al-bukhli, wa a'oodhu bika min ghalabati ad-dayni wa qahri ar-rijali." [Abu Umamah] said: "I did that, and Allah ﷻ removed my distress and settled my debt for me."

Narrated by Abu Dawood (1555) with a weak chain of narrators

Another means to remove hardship and calamity is to have patience. Allah ﷻ, says:

10

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاغِعُونَ. وَلِلَّهِ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ ۖ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ

{And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient, Who, when disaster strikes them, say, "Indeed we belong to Allāh, and indeed to Him we will return." Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided.}

Surah Al-Baqarah 155-157

Having patience means that you are patient upon worshipping Allah ﷻ, and that you continue doing righteous deeds during times of trial. It also means to avoid the prohibitions of Allah ﷻ. If a person is going through a financial crisis, for example, he does not look to interest-bearing loans for relief or attaining any sort of *haram* wealth. Instead, he is patient, fears Allah ﷻ, and waits for Allah ﷻ to grant him relief through His permissible means. Lastly, patience means that you endure the difficult things Allah ﷻ has decreed upon you, while still believing and having hope in Him.

Gratitude at the Time of Hardship

Chapter Six

The final step to take when coping with calamities is to always be grateful to Allah ﷻ for the blessings He has given you. There is no human being except that he or she receives blessings from Allah ﷻ on a constant basis. If one feels unhappy with his situation, being discontent with what is happening to him and he feels resentment, he must reshape his negative thoughts and remind Himself of the blessings of Allah. Allah ﷻ tests a person with a mixture of both good and evil throughout the course of his life:

- 1 **كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ۖ وَنَبْلُوكُم بِالشَّرِّ وَالْخَيْرِ فِتْنَةً ۚ وَإِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ**
Every soul will taste death. And We test you with evil and with good as trial; and to Us you will be returned.

Surah Al-Anbiya 35

In the following hadeeth, the Prophet ﷺ gives us the solution to feelings of being ungrateful or unhappy with one's situation:

- 2 **عن أبي هريرة، قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: «انظروا إلى من أسفل منكم، ولا تنظروا إلى من هو فوقكم، فهو أجدر أن لا تزدروا نعمة الله - قال أبو معاوية - عليكم»**
Abu Hurayrah (radiya Allahu ‘anhu) narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: “Look at those who are below you [i.e., less fortunate] and do not look at those who are above you. That is more likely that you will not disdain the blessings of Allah ﷻ upon you.”

Narrated by Muslim (2963)

Allah ﷻ has apportioned His provision as well as His trials – both good and evil – in varying degrees. There will always be a person who has more than one and always a person who has less. If a person is going through poverty, for example, he must look at those who are worse off than him. He should remember those who do not even have shelter and they live on the streets. Only then will he be grateful and avoid feelings of discontent. But if he looks at people who have more provision than him, he will feel as though he has no blessings at all. Allah ﷻ always reminds His servants to be thankful:

- 3 **اعملوا آل داود شكراً، وقليل من عبادي الشكور**
{"Work, O family of David, in gratitude." And few of My servants are grateful.}

Surah Saba 13

In a similar hadeeth to the one mentioned above, the Prophet ﷺ advises his Ummah:

- 4 **إِذَا نَظَرَ أَحَدُكُمْ إِلَى مَنْ فَضَّلَ عَلَيْهِ فِي الْمَالِ وَالْخَلْقِ، فَلْيَنْظُرْ إِلَى مَنْ هُوَ أَسْفَلَ مِنْهُ.**
Abu Hurayrah (radiya Allahu ‘anhu) narrated that Allah’s Messenger said: “If one you [wishes to] look at one who has been favored over him in wealth and creation, then let him look at one who is below him [in wealth and creation].”

Narrated by al-Bukharee (6490)

Lastly, remember that your tragedy, calamity or hardship will not last. After hardship always comes ease, as promised by Allah ﷻ. In regards to the saying of Allah ﷻ (interpretation of the meaning): **{For indeed, with hardship [will be] ease [i.e., relief]. Indeed, with hardship [will be] ease (Ash-Sharh 5-6)}**

فإن مع العسر يسرا. إن مع العسر يسرا

It was authentically narrated from ‘Umar (radiya Allahu ‘anhu) that he said:

لَنْ يَغْلِبَ عُسْرٌ يُسْرَيْنِ

One hardship will never overcome two [types] of ease.

Narrated by al-Hakim in Al-Mustadrak 329/2



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